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SHEPTON MALLET
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Including the Report of the Senior Sanitary Inspector

For the Year Ending 31st December, 1949

Shepton Mallet Rural District Council

CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE:

CHARLES NEALE, Esq.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS:

Medical Officer of Health (Part-Time):

Dr. T. E. COULSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.E.

Health Visitors:

Miss C. J. WOOD, Cannard's Grave, Shepton Mallet.

Miss I. M. ABBOTT, High Street, Glastonbury.

Senior Sanitary Inspector:

A. E. T. NETTING, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., Cert., R.S.I. & S.I.E.J. Board, Cert. Meat and Other Foods.

Additional Sanitary Inspector:

F. C. POWELL, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., Cert. R.S.I. & S.I.E.J. Board Cert. Meat & Other Foods.

Clerical Assistant:

Miss M. E. BROWN.

WINCANTON,

SOMERSET.

June, 1950.

TO THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SHEPTON MALLET.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADY SHEELAH GREENWAY AND GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1949.

1.—GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (in acres)	47,784
Population (1949)	10,760
Number of Inhabited Houses (1947)	3,057
Rateable Value	£43,822
Produce of a Penny Rate (estimated)	£176

2.—EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

BIRTHS.

LIVE BIRTHS :—	Males.	Females.
Total	82	83
Legitimate	78	79
Illegitimate	4	4

Birth Rate : 16.7 per 1,000.

STILLBIRTHS :—		
Total	2	1
Legitimate	1	1
Illegitimate	1	0

Birth Rate : 0.39 per 1,000.

DEATHS.

	Total.	Males.	Females.	
Deaths from all causes :	147	73	74	Death Rate 11.7 per 1,000.

Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, childbirth :—

(a) From Sepsis	0
(b) From other causes	0

Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age :—

	Males.	Females.
Total	3	3
Legitimate	3	3
Illegitimate	0	0

Deaths of Infants under One Week	4
,, ,, ,, from One to Four Weeks (inclusive)	1
,, ,, ,, from One to Six Months	1
,, ,, ,, from Six to Twelve Months	0
Total	6

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
,, ,, Whooping Cough (all ages)	1
,, ,, Diarrhoea (under two years)	0

There has not been any excessive mortality during the year.

The total number of Deaths occurring in the District was 147, compared with 119 in 1948.

The chief causes of Death were :—

Heart Disease and Diseases of the Circulatory System	38
Cancer	21
Cerebral Haemorrhage....	20
Old Age	18

In all " Causes of Death " :—

Those dying between the ages of 75 and 80 were	25
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, 81 and 85	18
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, 86 and 90 ,, ...	13
And dying above the age of 90	6

A total of 62 or 42.17 per cent. of the total Deaths.

3.—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Isolation Hospitals.	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	6	2	0
Diphtheria	1	0	0
Enteric Fever	1	0	0
Measles	34	1	0
Whooping Cough	33	0	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	0	0
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis	1	0	0
Pneumonia	3	0	9
Acute Poliomyelitis	5	2	0
Food Poisoning	2	0	0
Tuberculosis :—			
(a) Respiritory	11	0	3
(b) Non-Respiritory	1	0	0
	99	5	13

The Notification of Infectious Diseases in the District by Medical Practitioners was satisfactory except in the cases of Pneumonia.

4.—OPTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

No Cases Notified.

5.—CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

Measles was somewhat less in evidence throughout the District. The type of the disease was mild and there were no deaths.

Pneumonia caused 9 deaths.

6.—SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE IN THE DISTRICT.

A.—Professional Nursing in the Home :—

(1) General :—There are 9 nurses in the District engaged in general district work, who are affiliated to the County Nursing Association, and between them they cover the whole District.

(2) For Infectious Diseases :—Some of the cases of Infectious Disease were removed to Isolation Hospitals, the remainder were either nursed by their relatives or by nurses obtained from Nursing Homes or Hospitals outside the District.

B.—Midwives.

There are 9 Certified Midwives practising in the District.

C.—Clinics and Treatment Centres.

None in the District.

D.—Hospitals Situated in the District.

None.

E.—Institutional Provision for Unmarried Mothers, Illegitimate Infants and Homeless Children.

None.

F.—Ambulance Facilities.

(1) For Infectious Cases.—None.

(2) For Non-Infectious Cases and Accidents.—The Motor Ambulance provided by The County Council, and kept at The Wells Road Garage (Tel. 126), is used when necessary.

G.—Scabies.

No cases of Scabies have been brought to my notice.

7.—LABORATORY WORK.

Examinations of bacteriological and pathological specimens are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory at Taunton and considerable use of this Laboratory has been made during the year.

A supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is kept by Messrs. Boots (Chemists) and Miss Watkins (Chemist) at Shepton Mallet, and can be obtained by Practitioners on the National Health Service Prescription Form.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

1.—Water.

Bacteriological examination of water supplies throughout the year have been carried out by the arrangement with the County Laboratory of the Public Health Laboratory Service.

Generally speaking, as far as existing commitments were concerned, the amount of water proved sufficient, there having been no periods of serious drought. There were, of course, intermittent shortages in various parts of the district due to leakages on particular sections of the system.

The need for additional supplies becomes increasingly pressing there being insufficient water to meet new demands arising from requirements of individual premises, especially those on which food is handled and prepared for sale for human consumption.

The Council's proposals to meet this need, viz. :—The Ashwick Grove and St. Dunstan's Well Joint Water Scheme with Frome R.D.C., estimated to cost £235,000 were the subject of a Local Public Inquiry on August 30th of this year and it is pleasing to note that on 29th September, 1949, the Ministry of Health gave approval in principle to the scheme, subject to the submission of certain additional information, including proposals for sewering Stoke Lane and the elimination of all other known sources of pollution of the proposed sources.

Detailed results of bacteriological examinations carried out during the year are as follows :—

(a) Public Water Supplies.

1. Chlorinated Supplies.

Number of samples taken	10
Satisfactory	10
Not quite satisfactory	—
Unsatisfactory	—

2. Untreated Supplies.

Number of samples taken	14
Satisfactory	3
Not quite satisfactory	9
Unsatisfactory	2

(b) Private Piped Water Supplies used by Public (Untreated).

Number taken	16
Satisfactory	2
Not quite satisfactory	7
Unsatisfactory	7

(c) Other Private Water Supplies (Individual Premises, Farms, Etc.).

Number of samples taken	22
Satisfactory	5
Not quite satisfactory	7
Unsatisfactory	10

No chemical analyses were taken.

There is no liability to plumbo-solvent action from any of the water supplies.

Appropriate action was taken in all cases of unsatisfactory results except those in connection with the Council's own supplies, none of which were consistently unsatisfactory.

Available figures in relation to the supply of water in the various parishes are :—

Parish.	No. of houses.	No. having piped water supply into or on to the houses	No. of houses supplied by stand-pipe.	No. supplied by well or other supplies
Ashwick	309	238	51	21
Batcombe	108	47	19	42
Binegar	88	59	27	2
W. Bradley	85	66	12	7
Cranmore	121	60	39	22
Croscombe	171	54	96	21
Ditcheat	194	167	23	4
Doulting	156	107	27	22
Downhead	40	4	13	23
Emborough	57	49	6	2
Evercreech	412	341	46	24
Holcombe	171	137	30	4
Lamyatt	38	27	1	10
Lydford	120	9	12	99
Milton Clevedon	24	12	9	3
East Pennard	120	56	15	49
Pilton	244	195	25	24
Pylle	54	12	5	37
Stoke Lane	198	154	33	11
Stratton-on-the-Fosse	424	354	59	11
	3134	2148	548	438

MINISTRY OF HEALTH INQUIRY.

A Ministry of Health Inquiry was held at Shepton Mallet on August 30th, 1949, to inquire into the Ashwick Grove and St. Dunstan's Well water scheme

2.—Drainage and Sewerage.

During the year under review no extension of sewer, new works or improvements were carried out save as was required to serve new Council Houses.

Increasing development, especially in the larger parishes is making ever more urgent the need for new and improved sewerage systems and the preparation of schemes in connection with sewering of Gurney Slade, Croscombe, Stoke Lane and Stratton-on-the-Fosse has proceeded. Following a survey of the four parishes by the Sanitary Inspectors' Department, the necessary particulars were forwarded to the Council's Consulting Engineers with instructions to prepare detailed proposals. Application has been made to the County Council for approval.

It is to be hoped that enquiries into these schemes will be held at an early date, and the authority to proceed quickly follow.

The sewers of Evercreech have been giving grave cause for concern and investigation into ways and means for securing improvements was commenced.

The taking over of the Sewage Disposal Works at Oakhill from the Oakhill Brewery Co., Ltd., was considered and initial steps taken.

Future Proposals.

Proposals for new or improved sewers remain as reported previously.

Immediate proposals concern the sewering of the undermentioned areas at estimated costs as shown. Application has been made for County Council approval.

(a) Gurney Slade (only) with Disposal Works below Gurney Slade Pumping Station estimate £17,000.

(b) Stratton-on-the-Fosse Disposal Works South West Loocombe Wood estimate £21,000.

(c) Stoke Lane with Disposal Works at Edford estimate £25,000.

(d) Croscombe with Disposal Work below Townend Farm estimate £17,000.

An alternative scheme for Croscombe providing also for the sewering of Dinder in conjunction with Wells R.D.C. at an estimated cost of £23,000, was mooted, but having regard to the urgency of dealing with Croscombe and the apparent absence of urgency in dealing with Dinder, the proposal was not proceeded with.

The above estimated costs were based on 1949 prices.

(3) Closet Accommodation.

During the year 35 privies or pail closets were replaced by W.C.'s or earth closets.

(4) House Refuse Collection.

The Council's Karrier CK 3 lorry with a crew of driver and two loaders, has continued to give satisfactory service. This is the third year that the whole district has been served and household refuse has been removed by direct labour. During the year the lorry has travelled 10,269 miles, collecting approximately 1,677 tons of rubbish and 78 tons of soil as covering material.

Householders have been encouraged to provide proper covered dust-bins, and disposal of the refuse has continued at the two tips, Moorwood and Chelynch.

The same schedule of collection operated as for last year.

(5). Salvage.

The Salvage Collection Scheme wound up on 31st December, 1949, following the abandonment of the paper salvage campaign by the Board of Trade.

During the year the quantity of material salvaged had increased appreciably as had its sales value.

Weights and Sales from 1/1/49 to 31/12/49.:—

	T.	C.	Q.				£	s.	d.			
Paper	78	6	2	(58	12	3)	465	9	2	(440	19	7)
Ferrous Metals	74	5	1	(34	13	3)	110	5	0	(54	2	5)
Non-Ferrous Metals		4	3	(	3	0)	4	0	0	(3	19	11)
Rags	6	6	2	(4	9	3)	90	2	2	(86	5	3)
Bottles & Jars	1	16	3	(7	13	0)	52	4	9	(98	2	11)
Rubber		1	0	(9	0	1)		7	10	(9	5	11)
Bones	2	9	1	(2	8	0)	15	2	2	(15	0	0)
	163	9	3	(117	0	2)	737	11	2	(707	16	0)

The figures in brackets are those for the year 1948.

6.—Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The following report has been furnished to me by the Senior Sanitary Inspector under Article 27 of the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations, 1935.

The examination of meat at the Ministry of Food slaughterhouse took up much of the inspectors' time, but the relaxation of some of the Building Licensing Controls reduced the number of inspections which this entailed.

Statutory action under the Public Health Acts was kept to a minimum, informal action securing the abatement of nuisances in the majority of complaints investigated. In one instance, on appeal to the local court, an owner's objection to a statutory notice requiring him to improve the sanitary accommodation of three cottages was dismissed.

(a) Visits.

The following visits were made during the year :—

Dwellinghouses	284
Housing Act—Overcrowding	4
Infectious Disease	12
Factories	3
Bakehouses	3
Cowsheds, Dairies, Milkshops	91
Food Premises	24
Meat Inspection and Slaughterhouse	342
Knacker's Yard	2
Council Houses	153
Rats and Mice Suppression	253
Refuse Collection	56
Refuse Disposal	19
Drainage	77
Water Supplies	55
Verminous Premises	2
Control of Civil Building	28
Miscellaneous	170
Camping Sites and Moveable Dwelling	4
Outworkers	1

(b) Notices.

	Informal	Statutory
Served	97	11
Complied with	65	5
Outstanding	37	6

(c) List of Works Executed as a result of Notices.

Internal Work.

Rooms.

Damp remedied	10
Stripped, cleansed and redecorated	6
Plaster repaired	14
Floors repaired	16
Windows repaired, renewed or extended	18
Stoves repaired or renewed	5
Doors, locks, etc.	6
Ventilated Foodstore provided	4

Staircase.

Repairs	2
Stripped or redecorated	2

Sanitary Fitments.

New sinks	5
Copper provided or repaired	6
Privies abolished	2
Pails abolished	1
W.C's provided	2
Pail closets provided	1
W.C. repaired	9
Waste water pipe repaired or renewed	4

Drains.

Unstopped or repaired	4
New drains	7
Gullies repaired or renewed	8
Cesspools provided or repaired	2
Ditches cleansed	1

Water Supplies and Fittings.

New services	7
Repaired or renewed	4

External Works.

Roofs repaired or renewed	14
Gutters and R. W. pipes repaired or renewed	2
Walls repaired or renewed	6
Yards repaired or paved	5
Dustbins provided	33
Accumulations removed	4

Shops.

Heating provided	3
Light or ventilation provided	7
Washing facilities provided	5
Sundry general defects remedied	7
Sanitary accommodation provided	1

(d) Smoke Abatement.

No nuisances from smoke were reported during the year.

Numerous complaints were received, that a quarrying company operating in the district were causing a nuisance by the emission of stone dust from their plant. Following a visit to the plant by Dr. Mahler, an inspector of the Alkali, etc., Works, Westbury-on-Trym, the company were asked to carry out certain alterations and improvements, but up to the end of the year little or nothing had been done by way of improvement.

(e) Camping Sites.

There are no licensed camping sites in the district.

(f) Rag Flock Acts 1911 & 1928.

There are no premises in the district in which rag flock is manufactured, used or sold.

(g) Rats and Mice Destruction.

The Council's part time Rodent operator dealt with infested premises during the year. These infestations were largely brought to light during the continuance of the survey commenced in 1948 ; very few complaints having been received.

Regular maintenance treatments have been carried out on the Council's refuse tips, and the Evercreech sewers, where the location and remedying of defects in a house drainage system allowing access of rats into the sewers has enabled the system to be largely cleared of rats.

(h) Insect Pest.

Very few cases of infestation have been reported, two cases of flea infestation only having been dealt with.

FACTORIES.

1.—Inspection for purpose of provisions as to health.

Premises. (1).	Number on Register. (2)	Inspections. (3)	Written notices. (4)	Occupiers prosecuted. (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	15	8		
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies : (a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement) Order, 1938 (b) Others	51	18	5	
(iii) Other premises under the Act (excluding outworkers' premises)				
Total	66	26	5	—

2.—Cases in which Defects were found.

Particulars.	Number of cases in which defects were found.			By H.M. Inspector.	No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found.	Remedied.	To H.M. Inspector.		
Want of cleanliness (S1)					
Overcrowding (S2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S4)	2	2	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S6) ...					
Sanitary conveniences (S7)					
(a) Insufficient					
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...	3	3	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes ...					
Other offences (not including offences relating to Home-work)					
Total	5	5	—	—	—

3.—Outworkers.

There were 42 outworkers in the district all employed in the gloving industry by firms outside the district.

HOUSING.

1.—Action under Housing Act, 1936.

Formal action under Section 11 was taken in respect of six properties, four demolition orders being made and two undertakings not to use for human habitation accepted. In all but two instances the tenants were rehoused by the Council.

No formal action was taken under Section 9, informal action under the Public Health Act securing the carrying out of many necessary repairs. It is, however, becoming increasingly evident that many owners are in no position to pay for the increased costs of repairs.

2.—Overcrowding.

Four new cases of overcrowding were reported during the year, one of which was abated by the Council re-housing the tenant. The remaining cases will be abated when houses become available in the parish concerned.

3.—Housing Programme.

Twenty-nine Council houses were completed and occupied during the year, an increase of 1 on the previous year's figure of 28.

The number of applicants on the waiting list on December 31st was 285, an increase of 18 over the year before in spite of the completed new houses.

Total number of applications for Council Houses at the close of the year (in rooms 52)	285
Number of houses erected by the Local Authority during the year	29
Number of houses erected by Private Enterprise during the year	14
Number of houses in course of erection by Private Enterprise	7
Number of houses in course of erection by Local Authority	38
Number of unfit houses licensed for habitation	27
Number of houses continuing to be requisitioned by the Council	20
Number of houses previously condemned but still occupied....	9

INSPECTION & SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

1.—Milk Supply.

Prior to the transfer of many of the functions of the local authority to the Ministry of Agriculture the numbers of registered dairy premises were as follows :—

Number of Producers registered	416
Number of Producer-retailers registered	37
Number of Retailers (Not Producers)	5
Heat treatment plants	1

Designated Milk.

Number of Producers T.T. Milk	104
Number of Producers Accredited Milk	88
Number of Retailers T.T. Milk	3
Number of Retailers Pasteurised Milk	Nil.

Designated milk sampling was carried out entirely by the County Officers.

Many new cowsheds and dairies in addition to numerous improvements were being carried out at the time of transfer.

2.—Ice-Cream.

No. of premises registered for :—

(a) Manufacture	Nil.
(b) Sale	13

Samples were regularly taken from the various retailers, most of whom were selling pre-packed ice-cream from well-known manufacturers.

3.—Meat and Other Foods. (Inspections and Condemnations).

	Cattle excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed	592	1338	4443	4802	106
Number inspected	592	1338	4443	4802	106
All Diseases except Tuberculosis					
Whole Carcases condemned	59		90	58	13
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	495		12	339	28
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	28.7		2.3	8.2	38.6
Tuberculosis Only.					
Whole carcases condemned	49		17	—	5
Carcase of which some part or organ was condemned	411		7	—	4
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	23.8		.55	—	8.49

Total weight of diseased/unsound food condemned.: 48tons 4cwts. 2qtrs.

Other Foods Surrendered.

6 lb. English beef.	Deep seated bruising.
2 x 10½ oz. tins Batchelors Peas.	Blown and Perforated Condition.
1 x 15 oz. Silver Hake.	,, ,, ,, ,,
1 x 11 oz. tin Evaporated Milk (Full Cream).	,, ,, ,, ,,
3 doz. ½ lb. packets "Summell Cup."	Damp and Rat infested condition.
10 x 16 oz. tins peas.	Blown condition.
1 x 29 oz. tin Cod Roe	,, ,,
3 x 1 lb. 3 oz. Can Peas.	Blown and Perforated condition.
1 x 3 lb. 12 oz. Can Luncheon Meat.	,, ,, ,, ,,
2 x 1 oz. Cans Heinz Baked Beans.	,, ,, ,, ,,
2 x 3 lb. Cans Pork Brawn.	Blown condition.
1 Ox. Head and Tongue (30 lbs.).	Decomposition.
2 x 26 oz. Bottled Rhubarb.	Decomposition and Fermentation.
4 x 7 oz. Bottles Tomato Ketchup.	,, ,, ,, ,,
2 x 1 lb. 3. oz. Cans Batchelors Peas.	Blown Condition.
1 x 10 oz. Can Tomato Soup.	Perforated Condition.
1 Can Sausage Spaghetti.	Blown and Perforated Condition.
1 20 oz. Can Apple Sauce.	,, ,, ,, ,,
1 x 2 lb. Can Diced Carrots.	,, ,, ,, ,,
12 x 1⅞ pint Tins Condensed Skimmed Milk	(Leaky condition of cans caused by
1 x 1¾ pint Tins Condensed Full Cream Milk.	springing of seams during damage in transit).
6 Tins Full Cream Unsweetened Milk.	Blown, rusted and badly damaged.
12 x A1. Waveney Beans in Tomato Sauce.	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
2 x 2½ Tins ,, ,, ,, ,,	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
2 x A1 Peas	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
2 x 11 oz. Tin Veal Loaf	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
6 Tins Full Cream Unsweetened Milk.	Blown and perforated.
1 x 7 oz. Tin Whiting in Tomato Sauce.	Blown.
1 x 12 oz. Tin Beaf Loaf (Minced)	State of decomposition.
14 lbs. English Mutton.	,, ,, ,,
7 lbs. Fore end of Smoked Bacon.	Bone taint.
1 x 1 lb. Tin Danish Pork.	Blown.
4½ lbs. Fore-end Smoked Bacon.	Bone taint.
1 x 16 oz. Tin Sliced Peaches.	Blown, in state of decomposition.
1 x 16 oz. Tin Danish Hafnia Pork.	,, ,, ,, ,,
20 lbs. Forequarter of English Beef.	Deep bruising.
23 lbs. English Beef.	Decomposition.
2 Ox Lungs (8 lbs.) 2 Ox Hearts (8 lbs.).	,,
1 Ox Liver (10 lbs.) 2 Melts (3 lbs.).	,,
6 Calves Heads (39 lbs.).	,,
6 Calves Plucks, 2 Calves Lungs (23 lbs.).	,,

Food Poisoning Outbreak.

No. of Outbreaks.	No. of Cases.	No. of Deaths.	Organisms Responsible.	Foods Involved.
1	2	0	Not Ascertained.	Not Ascertained.

4.—Slaughter Houses.

Number of Registered Slaughterhouses	Nil.
Number of Licensed Slaughterhouses	3
Number of Slaughterhouses in use under Ministry of Food	1
Licensed Knackers' Yard	1

No further improvements were carried out during the year to the Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse at Pylle, and conditions under which meat inspection had to be carried out remained decidedly unsatisfactory.

5.—Slaughter of Animals Act, 1933.

A register of all licensed slaughtermen, pursuant to Section 3 (1) of the above Act, is kept, and the number so licensed is 14.

I have the honour to be, Mr. Chairman, Lady Sheelah and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

T. E. COULSON,

Medical Officer of Health.